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NEWS RELEASE

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April 19, 1999

Contact: Daniel Nelson for academic conference information, (406) 243-3546; Cheryl Smoker for powwow information, (406) 549-8575.

AMERICAN INDIAN ACADEMIC CONFERENCE, POWWOW COMING TO UM MISSOULA-

The University of Montana's annual Kyi-Yo Powwow will be paired this year with an academic conference for American Indian scholars.

The academic conference will be held Thursday and Friday, April 29-30, at the main UM campus. The 31st annual Kyi-Yo Powwow is scheduled for Friday through Sunday, April 30-May 2, in the Loyola Ram Activity Center. All events have been organized by UM's Kyi-Yo Native American Students Association.

The academic conference and powwow collectively have been dubbed Kyi-Yo Days. (Kyi-Yo is Blackfeet for "grizzly.") The conference and powwow will honor Bonnie "Sim sin" Heavy Runner, the former director of UM's Native American Studies Department, who helped organize the first Kyi-Yo academic conferences. Kyi-Yo association President Daniel Nelson (Dine' and Aha Macav) said all subsequent Kyi-Yo conferences will honor Heavy Runner's memory.

The academic conference will include:

- a student panel discussion titled "Making the Transition to Higher Education: Issues for American Indian Students at The University of Montana" on Thursday, April 29, at 10 a.m. in James E. Todd Building Room 204.

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– a panel discussion titled “Exciting and Important Careers for American Indian Students That Benefit Their Communities” on Thursday, April 29, at 1 p.m. in Todd Building Room 204. Panelists will include Dennis McAuliffe (Osage) with the UM journalism school, Tina Desjarlais (Dine’) with UM’s American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL), Patrick “Apo takan” Weaselhead with the Rural Systemic Initiative, Deborah Pace (Kainai) with UM’s Department of Psychology and Duane Jeanette with Indian Health Services. Joe McDonald (Salish), president of Salish Kootenai College, will moderate.

– “A Night in the Native Arts” on Thursday, April 29, from 6 to 9 p.m. in the University Center Commons. Sponsored by AIBL and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), the event will include singing, dancing and storytelling. Groups scheduled to appear are Native Reign, Wambli Zephier, Morning Star Zephier and the Descending Eagle Aztec Dancers.

– the first AISES High School Academic Bowl Playoffs on Friday, April 30, in Todd Building Rooms 203 and 204. Involving Indian scholars from eight Montana schools and junior colleges, the contest will start at 9 a.m. and again at 1 p.m. The championship round will be at 3 p.m.

The powwow portion of Kyi-Yo Days will be held off campus this year at the Loyola Ram Activity Center, located at 1040 S. First St., due to renovation of UM’s Adams Center. Montana’s premier university powwow once again will feature traditional-, fancy-, jingle- and grass-dance contests, as well as singing and drumming. Grand entries, featuring the host drums of Blacklodge and Eya Hay Nakota, will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, April 30; 1 and 7 p.m. Saturday, May 1; and noon Sunday, May 2. Miss Ky-Yo, Lil’ Miss Kyi-Yo and Tiny Tot

Princess contests also are scheduled.

In addition, the family of Simon Paul will sponsor a traditional dance special, the Shawn Scabby Robe family will host a chicken dance special and Tina Abrahamson will sponsor a team dance special.

"We want to stress that the public is welcome," powwow organizer Cheryl Smoker said. "We want to share our culture with the Missoula community. That's why we do this."

Admission is \$2 per session, with registered dancers, drummers, elders over 60 and children 6 and under admitted free. Dance registration costs \$2 per contestant, and dancers should arrive to register a half hour to an hour before the powwow starts for the day. The fee for arts and crafts vendors for all three days is \$200 for those who register by April 26 and \$250 for those who register thereafter.

The annual Bonnie "Sim sin" Heavy Runner Memorial Tipi Race will be held on campus Saturday at 10 a.m. in the softball field located north of the Adams Center.

Participants race to see who can erect a tipi the fastest.

For more information about the academic conference, call Daniel Nelson at (406) 243-3546 or e-mail dannyboy@selway.umt.edu. For information about the powwow call Cheryl Smoker at (406) 549-8575 or e-mail smoker@selway.umt.edu. Call Aislinn Combes at (406) 327-6724 or e-mail acandkp@aol.com to learn more about the tipi race, and contact Gisele Forrest at (406) 549-4890 or e-mail gisele@selway.umt.edu to learn about Night in the Native Arts. The Kyi-Yo club office number is (406) 243-2703.

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